



# MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

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## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

**1. Project Title:** Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association Range

**2. Type of Proposed Action:**

The Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association proposes to expand and improve the small bore rifle silhouette, small bore cowboy silhouette, high power rifle silhouette, and center fire cowboy silhouette ranges by improving the silhouette target lines, modifying the target transportation trailers, extending the target lines and bullet back stops, and adding more bays on the center fire rifle silhouette line.

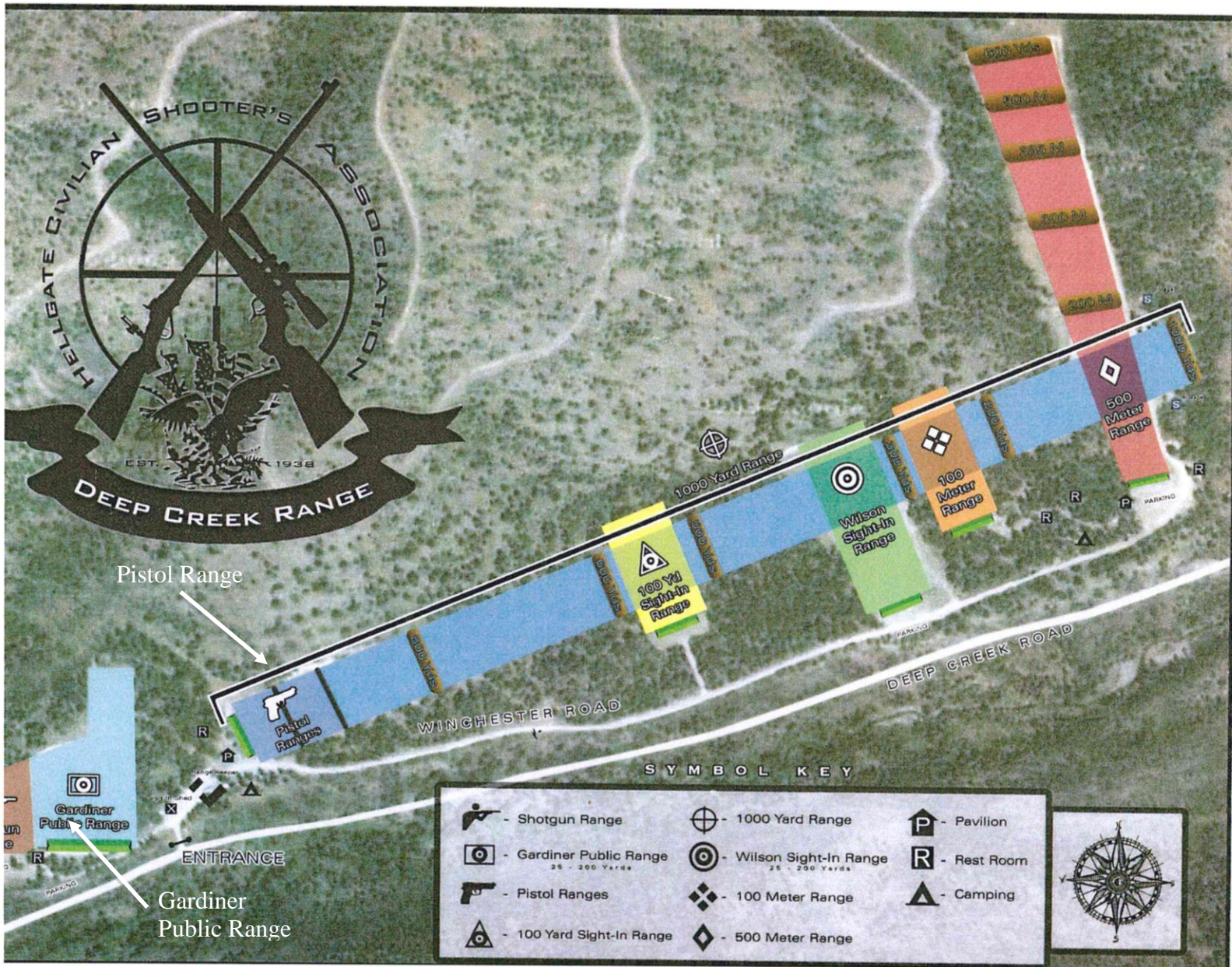
**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:**

The Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association (HCSA) Deep Creek Range is located on 100 acres state land leased from Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP), approximately, 7 miles northwest of Missoula, Montana at 17770 Deep Creek Road, Missoula, Montana 59804, Lat. 46.92581, Long. -114.24721, Section 34, Township 14 North, Range 21 West.





**Map 1 - Aerial Photo of the Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association Deep Creek Range.**



**Map2. Facilities Map for Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association Deep Creek Range.**

**4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;
- (ii) May not limit the number of members;
- (iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and
- (iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or
- (b) Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.

## **5. Need for the Action(s):**

The small bore range has only one firing point for use on the small bore cowboy silhouette targets. This will expand that capacity to four firing points as well as keeping the six small bore rifle-firing points. It will allow for dual use of this range and increase capacity for monthly, state, and regional matches as well as club practice matches. The high-power range has only one firing point for use of the center-fire cowboy silhouette targets. This will expand that capacity to three firing points as well as keeping the four high-power rifle firing points. It will allow for dual use of this range and increase the capacity for monthly, state, and regional matches as well as club practice matches.

## **6. Objectives for the Action(s):**

The objectives of the proposed project are to expand and improve the small bore rifle silhouette and high-power rifle silhouette ranges and to modify the target transportation system.

## **7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:**

The Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association Deep Creek Range is located on 100 acres of state land leased from FWP. The proposed improvements will involve approximately 10 acres of the 100-acre HCSA Deep Creek Range.

## **8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):**

The Deep Creek Range is located on 100 acres of land owned by FWP. The HCSA entered into a 10-year lease agreement with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in 2017, which is due to expire in 2027. There are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. The Deep Creek Range offers opportunities for several shooting sports, including cowboy action shooting, rifle silhouette, small-bore and center-fire rifle, Schutzen rifle, 1000-yard bench-rest rifle, Black Powder cartridge silhouette rifle, Black Powder cartridge long-range prone rifle, and high-power rifle.

## **9. Description of Project:**

The HCSA proposes to expand and improve the small bore and high power rifle silhouette ranges. The estimated budget includes:

▪ Fabricraft, Trailer Modifications, Rail Construction	\$ 5,240
▪ Labor	\$ 5,970
▪ Materials- Steel, Railroad Iron, Trailer Decking, Hardware	\$ 7,830
▪ Excavation and Dirt Work on Firing Lines	\$ 6,075
▪ Equipment Rental and Fuel	\$ 400
▪ Grant Application and Management	\$ 925
▪ Total Project Budget	\$ 26,440
▪ Total Funding Requested from FWP	\$ 13,220



**10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

None

**Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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N/A

**Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$13,220
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**11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:**

The Hellgate Civilian Shooters Association Deep Creek Range is a private range for the use of paying members. Membership fees are \$40 for an individual and \$40 for a family. Visitors can shoot for a day use fee of \$5.

The HCSA Deep Creek Range hosts approximately 39 events per year and seven organizations use the range each year, including: Missoula County Sheriff's Department; Boy Scouts; Montana Highway Patrol; Army Reserve; Montana National Guard; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Missoula Police Department; and U.S. Forest Service. In addition, the range is always open for Hunter Safety Classes.

**12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:**

Because the HCSA Deep Creek Range is a private nonprofit shooting range for members, there has been no public involvement in the planning process. Proposed range improvement proposals have been discussed with the club members and the associated project vendors and contractors.

**13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Mike Cassidy, 5552 Eastside Highway, Stevensville, MT 59870, (406) 240-5591.

**15. Other Pertinent Information:**

The HCSA is a nonprofit private shooting club. The Deep Creek Range provides a variety of rifle shooting facilities. The closest range offering cowboy action shooting is located over 120 miles from the Deep Creek Range in Butte, MT. The closest high-power rifle and center-fire silhouette rifle is 110 miles from the range in Rucker, MT. The closest small-bore silhouette rifle range is 147 miles away in Townsend, MT and the closest 100-yard range is 315 miles away in Rexford, ID.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: January 30, 2018.

**PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

Alternative A, the Proposed Alternative, and Alternative B, the No Action Alternative, were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project):

to expand and improve the small bore silhouette and high power rifle silhouette ranges at the Deep Creek Range. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.

- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. The no action alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

**Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**

None. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There was no other alternative that were deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

**List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations):** None

**PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmentally sensitive areas.

**Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		4
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		7
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		8

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		11

**2. & 5.** There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may leave the immediate area during road re-surfacing activity.

**4.** The elimination of vegetation for the implementation of the proposed project will not change the overall abundance and diversity of plant species within the area. The proposed project occupies a small portion of the property. Due to prior land use, native vegetation has been disturbed in the area of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project will have a minor impact on native vegetation in the area.

**7.** The proposed project will cause limited displacement of soils but the developments will not substantially effect geological features or establish new erosion patterns. Soil disruption for this site is localized. Erosion control measures will be in effect and disturbed areas will be reseeded.

**8.** Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during improvement and maintenance of the access road and parking areas. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population in the surrounding area.

**9.** This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

**11.** The property is already used as a shooting range so the proposed project will have no additional impact on the aesthetics of the property.

**Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		

2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

5. The proposed improvements to the small bore and high power rifle silhouette ranges will improve the safety and convenience to all shooters and visitors, including disabled users, at the HCSA Deep Creek Range.

7. The proposed improvements to the HCSA Deep Creek Range will improve the quality of the shooting sports within the community.

#### **PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range/alterd areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative.

The HCSA proposed alternative, to provide a safe, regulated shooting opportunity, is supported by its

members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Paragraph 9.

## **PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?** No

**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?** Individually, the proposed actions may have minor, temporary impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

### **Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:**

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

## **PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

### **Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

- Mike Cassidy, 5552 Eastside Highway, Stevensville, MT 59870, (406) 240-5591.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

### **EA prepared by:**

Andrea Darling, Darling Natural Resource Consulting, Montana City, MT 59634

### **Date Completed:**

May 10, 2018

### **Describe public involvement, if any:**

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Missoulian*, *Missoula*, *MT* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.